
Office of Tribal Government Relations Newsletter ~ October 2013



Welcome from the OTGR Director

Greetings and welcome to the October edition of our monthly VA OTGR national newsletter. We've assembled another great collection of news, announcements and information that should be informative to our Veterans, tribal leaders, Veteran service providers and our readership. Although October came with its own challenges, there continued to be a lot of activity across Indian Country when it came to serving Veterans. The VA booth at the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Annual Convention and Marketplace held in Tulsa saw 100 contacts and VA officials presented information to the NCAI Veterans Committee about the role of VA Veterans Justice Outreach workers in offering support to tribal justice systems and Indian Country's justice involved Veterans.

The United South and Eastern Tribes' (USET) annual meeting was held in Cherokee, North Carolina. Veteran's Benefits Administration (VBA) leadership and staff from the VBA Loan Guaranty Service were on hand to share information about VA's plans to launch a communications effort to raise the profile of the Native American Direct Loan (NADL), a mortgage product available to American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans living on trust lands. To date, approximately 80 tribes have MOUs which secure Veterans' ability to use the product. VA is embarking on an effort to consistently offer briefings and information to tribal leadership, Veterans, tribal housing authorities, and key federal partners who have a role in ensuring information about the NADL product is up to date and readily accessible. In fact, on November 22, 2013 from 2:00 to 3:00 pm EST, VBA is hosting a live interactive webcast focused on NADL. The webcast link is:

http://www.va.gov/TRIBALGOVERNMENT/OTGR_Livestream.asp. If you have questions regarding the NADL product, or don't know whether your tribe has an MOU with VA/VBA, don't hesitate to reach out and ask. Questions can be sent via email during and before the webcast to tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov. Don't miss out on this opportunity to learn more about this great option for Veteran home ownership in Indian Country.

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs teamed up with VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations to host the Tribal Veterans Representatives conference in Shelton, Washington, home of the Squaxin Island Tribe. Information was shared about the Native American Direct Loan, the fully developed claims initiative, state resources for Veterans and the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administrations (SAMHSA) training focused on SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR), among other offerings. This event was a great opportunity for offering continuing education and to network with others serving

Veterans across tribal communities as well as to meet and discuss priorities and challenges with key federal and state officials.

We also began work on creating a tribal leader Veteran photo grid. We are sending out a call to all tribal leaders (elected or appointed officials) past and present, who are either active duty service members or Veterans and have a high resolution jpeg image that they would like to submit for inclusion in the photo grid. We would also like to have your full name, branch of service, years served and any other important information you would like to share for reference. Photos and information can be submitted to the following email address: tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov or send directly to your regional Tribal Government Relations Specialist (see www.va.gov/tribalgovernment click on “Meet the OTGR Staff” for regional points of contact). The tribal leader Veteran photo grid will be displayed on the VA tribal government website early next year.

As we bid farewell to October and look forward to November, we can find our Southwest Region tribal government relations specialist, Homana Pawiki attending the Indian Health Service and New Mexico VA Healthcare System 15th Annual Veterans Symposium on Friday November 8 at the Pueblo of Laguna Route 66 Casino Hotel, located just outside Albuquerque. The purpose (registration is free) of the event is “To recognize and honor the military service of Native Americans; and to orient Veterans and their families on benefits and programs available from the Indian Health Service and the NM VA Healthcare system.” This event is well attended and offers an excellent opportunity for attendees to see collaborative efforts on behalf of our Veterans in action. Over here in the East, we are looking forward to, along with our entire federal family, welcoming tribal leaders to Washington, D.C. as VA participates in the 5th Annual White House Tribal Nations Conference which also offers an opportunity for tribal leaders to dialogue with representatives from the White House Native American Affairs Council, which includes the VA Secretary as a member of the Council.

November is a month of celebration, recognition and thanksgiving. It brings us Veterans Day, a time of year that we pay special honor and extend our deep gratitude to our active duty service members and Veterans, it is Native American Heritage Month, a time that we celebrate and share our rich and diverse cultures with our friends, family and colleagues, and November is the month that brings us into the holiday season, offering time to reflect on all for which we have to be thankful. For the OTGR team, this includes the opportunity to learn from and serve our Veterans, their families and tribal communities through our work each day. We encourage our readers to consider ways to honor, recognize and serve Veterans in your local communities. Our team (as well as our VA colleagues) also enjoys receiving stories and photos from across Indian Country of how tribal communities commemorate Veterans Day. Please submit information you’d like to share to our tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov mailbox.

Happy Reading – Stephanie



President Obama Announces 2013 White House Tribal Nations Conference

WASHINGTON, DC – On Wednesday, November 13, President Obama will host the White House Tribal Nations Conference at the Department of the Interior. The conference will provide leaders from the 566 federally recognized tribes the opportunity to interact directly with the President and members of the White House Council on Native American Affairs. Each federally recognized tribe will be invited to send one representative to the conference. This will be the fifth White House Tribal Nations Conference for the Obama Administration, and continues to build upon the President's commitment to strengthen the government-to-government relationship with Indian Country and to improve the lives of Native Americans. Additional details about the conference will be released at a later date.

Income Exclusions for Pension

A question was posed at a recent VA Tribal Veteran Representative (TVR) training: **"Regarding income exclusions for pension, why is there a \$2,000 limit when VA recognizes that Native American income exclusions for income paid from trust or restricted lands."** Here is the answer:

Under section 1503(a) of title 38, United States Code, generally all payments of any kind from any source are counted as income for purposes of VA pension unless specifically excluded by law. Federal law provides many exclusions from income for purposes of pension for various payments provided to Native Americans. Many of these statutory exclusions are listed in VA regulations at 38 C.F.R. § 3.272. At least two provisions in that regulation provide for \$2,000 exclusions. Section 3.272(r) provides a \$2,000 exclusion per year for income received by American Indian beneficiaries from trust or restricted lands. Section 3.272(t) excludes up to \$2,000 per year, per individual, for profits of native businesses (cash dividends on stock received from a Native Corporation). In each of these regulations, and for other exclusions from income provided in VBA's adjudication procedures manual, the authority for the exclusion is generally a Public Law.



Healing the Warrior's Heart



“One of the great challenges facing America today is how best to support the men and women in uniform who have served in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some veterans are coming home with physical wounds, while many more are returning with wounds of the heart and mind. Today we call it PTSD, though previous generations have had different names for it: “soldiers’ heart” during the Civil War and “shell shock” in World War I. Native Americans have also known war and its consequences, both during times of conflict with the United States and more recently as brothers-in-arms fighting for our country. And they’ve long understood that helping warriors heal emotionally and spiritually is key to maintaining a healthy society.



Within traditional circles in tribal communities throughout the intermountain West, healing songs and ceremonies that reach back generations remain vital in our time. *Healing the Warrior's Heart* is a public television documentary that presents a Native American perspective on the veteran experience. It reveals the central role that military service plays in Native life, and the spiritual traditions that help American Indian soldiers reintegrate into society and cleanse themselves of war. It explores the reasons why American Indians enlist in great numbers, and the challenges they face when they return to remote reservations where there is little economic opportunity. *Healing the Warrior's Heart* will follow a young soldier returning home to a traditional circle of family and friends on a reservation in the West, and chronicle the group's efforts to support their loved one. We will meet other veterans from the tribe whose insight and personal narratives speak to the larger experience of Native Americans in the military. Their

legacy holds lessons for America, as we bring home the latest generation of fighters from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.



Healing the Warrior's Heart is a production of the Western Folklife Center in collaboration with Gary Robinson of Tribal Eye Productions, and KUED Channel 7, Salt Lake City's PBS affiliate. Producer Taki Telonidis' previous documentary work includes *Red Rock Rondo* and *Why the Cowboy Sings*, which premiered on KUED and were later distributed nationally on PBS. He has created more than 100 radio features that aired nationally on NPR, many of which highlighted Native American traditions. Gary Robinson (Choctaw and Cherokee) is the author of two books about Native Americans in the US Military, and has produced and/or edited more than 100 video/television programs. Much of his work has been about or on behalf of American Indian tribes, including several short videos about veterans from reservations in the West."

Click [here](#) for a link to the website, which includes a 12 minute trailer.

Retired Army Mechanic Vies For Ms. Veteran America

For the original Denver Post article, click [HERE](#)



COLORADO SPRINGS — Mitchelene Big Man knows tough. She has braved some of life's worst storms, including post-traumatic stress disorder and her son's suicide attempt. Through it all, the proud American Indian and retired Army mechanic kept a brave face. She'll don that brave face again when she takes the stage of the National Conference Center in Leesburg, Va., on Sunday as Colorado's only contestant in the

second annual Ms. Veteran America competition. But nerves abound. Big Man's biggest worry: negotiating the stage in a ball gown and heels.

"The competition is going to pull me out of my comfort zone, which is Timberlands, tennis shoes and jeans," said Big Man, 48, a Pueblo West resident who spent the bulk of her career in a world dominated by men. "My husband said it's bringing out the warrior and the lady in me, that I'll be a woman of valor and glamour at the same time." The Pueblo Chemical Depot security and law enforcement secretary decided to enter at the urging of a fellow member of Native American Women Warriors, a nonprofit Big Man founded in 2010 that seeks to assist American Indian women veterans in making a successful transition to the civilian world.

Organizers insist that Ms. Veteran America isn't a pageant. Contestants must answer questions about each service branch's history and recite statistics on the number of homeless women veterans during the interview portion of the competition, Big Man said. The competition also requires them to don an evening gown and a cocktail dress. The winner will be crowned Sunday with a glittering tiara. It's the attire, not the interview, that makes Big Man — a former dock worker and firefighter, and a tomboy at heart — the most nervous. "But I'm not a quitter," she said.

Big Man, a Crow, grew up on a reservation near Billings, Mont. After graduating from high school and deciding that shift work wasn't for her, she enrolled at Montana State University. But she soon found herself caught up in partying and unsure of what career path to choose. "I needed something to get me more focused and disciplined," she said. "I needed to do something that I had no choice but to finish." She enlisted in the Army .

Big Man enjoyed her time in Germany and Korea and even her time in Iraq. As her convoy, one of the first to enter Iraq from Kuwait, crossed the border in 2003, Big Man recalls feeling an excitement her comrades couldn't understand. Big Man, who retired from the Army in 2009 while stationed at Fort Carson, hopes she left a positive impression on the Iraqis she met — just as she hopes to leave a positive impression on those who watch the competition. Big Man's supervisor, Mark Szarmach, chief of security and law enforcement at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, is confident that she will. "Her dedication to Native American veterans and our government are without question," he said.



Code Talkers Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony

The Congress of the United States will host a Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony (CGMC) in Washington D.C. at **11 a.m. on November 20, 2013**, in Emancipation Hall of the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center (CVC) complex, recognizing the service of Native American Code Talkers during World War I and World War II. The ceremony is by invitation only and in accordance with the “Code Talkers Recognition Act of 2008,” [Public Law 110-420](#).

More than 30 tribes have been identified as having members who were code talkers (see complete list below). During the ceremony, twenty-five tribes will receive their gold medal and one tribe design will be unveiled. All other tribes will receive their medal upon completion of the design development and approval process.

The initial program outline of the CGMC is below.

Gold Medal Ceremony Initial Program Outline:

Prelude
Welcome (Speaker Boehner)
Presentation of the Colors
National Anthem
Retiring of the Colors
Invocation (Chaplain, United States Senate)
Remarks on the Congressional Gold Medal (Members of Congress)
Musical Selection (Military Chorus)
Remarks (Congressional Leadership)
Presentation of the Congressional Gold Medals
Special Remarks (USG Official)
Benediction (Chaplain, U.S. House of Representatives)
Postlude

The Code Talkers Recognition Act of 2008 (Act) ([Public Law 110-420](#)) requires the Secretary of the Treasury to strike Congressional Medals in recognition of the dedication and valor of Native American code talkers to the U.S. Armed Services during World War I and World War II. Under the Act, unique gold medals are struck for each Native American tribe that had a member who served as a code talker. Silver duplicate medals are presented to the specific code talkers, their next of kin, or other personal representatives. In addition, bronze duplicates are available for sale to the public

Medals Awarded on November 20, 2013

1. Cherokee Nation (Oklahoma)
2. Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe (South Dakota)
3. Choctaw Nation (Oklahoma)
4. Comanche Nation (Oklahoma)
5. Crow Creek Sioux Tribe (South Dakota)
6. Fort Peck Assiniboiné and Sioux Tribes (Montana)
7. Ho-Chunk Nation (Wisconsin)
8. Hopi Tribe (Arizona)
9. Kiowa Tribe (Oklahoma)
10. Menominee Nation (*design unveiled at the ceremony*) – (Wisconsin)
11. Meskwaki Nation (Iowa)
12. Muscogee Creek Nation (Oklahoma)
13. Oglala Sioux Tribe (South Dakota)
14. Oneida Nation (Wisconsin)
15. Osage Nation (Oklahoma)
16. Pawnee Nation (Oklahoma)
17. Ponca Tribe (Oklahoma)
18. Pueblo of Acoma Tribe (Arizona)
19. Santee Sioux Nation (Nebraska)
20. Seminole Nation (Oklahoma)
21. Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate (Sioux) Tribe (South Dakota)
22. Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (South Dakota)
23. Tlingit Tribe (Alaska)
24. Tonto Apache Tribe (Arizona)
25. White Mountain Apache Tribe (Arizona)
26. Yankton Sioux Tribe (South Dakota)

Medals Awarded at a later date

27. Lower Brule Sioux Tribe
28. Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes
29. Chippewa Tribe
30. Crow Tribe
31. Laguna Pueblo Tribe
32. Rosebud Tribe
33. Mohawk Tribe



Chaplain Service Guidelines Concerning Native American Indian/Alaska Native Traditional Practitioners

POLICY: 42 U.S.C. § 1996 states: “It shall be the policy of the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiians, including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites.” This Chaplain Service policy provides guidelines for the utilization of Native American Indian Traditional Practitioners (hereinafter referred to as “Traditional Practitioners”) within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Chaplain Service.

PURPOSE: Native American Indian traditional practices seek to restore a healing balance to the mind, body, heart and spirit. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that veteran patients who express an interest in these traditional practices are provided opportunities for free exercise of religion and receive spiritual health care services that are accessible and culturally appropriate. Services are to be coordinated under the auspices of the local Chaplain service.

- PROCEDURE:**
1. Through spiritual assessment, an employed chaplain will identify veteran patients who request Native American Indian traditional practices as their preference for spiritual care.
 2. The National Chaplain Center will obtain a list of federal- or state-registered Tribes that will verify the competency of Traditional Practitioners to provide ceremonial rites and traditions to interested veteran patients.
 3. Local Chaplain Services will, in consultation with the National Chaplain Center and the local Native Coordinator, Native American Indian Special Emphasis Program (NAISEP) Manager (Office of Equal Employment Opportunity), or the Minority Veteran Coordinator (MVC), maintain a roster of community Traditional Practitioners whose competency is verified by listed Tribes to provide Traditional practices to veteran patients who request such ceremonies and rites.
A sample verification letter is attached.
 4. Local Native Coordinators/NAISEP Managers will serve as advisors to local Chaplain Services in matters of Native American Indian culture.
 5. The Chaplain will refer the Traditional Practitioner to the interested veteran patient to provide traditional practices after consulting with the primary care physician to assure that the patient’s participation

-
- in traditional practices will not endanger his or her health. In certain instances, the primary care physician may need to sign a medical clearance order for a patient to participate in traditional practices.
6. Every effort will be made to honor specific requests of veterans since traditions and native ceremonies vary from tribe to tribe.
 7. The Chaplain may find that a veteran patient expressing a preference for Native American traditional practices also identifies with another religious faith group. The Chaplain may facilitate ministry—both religious and Native American Indian traditional practices—to the veteran patient in accordance with the findings of the Chaplain’s spiritual assessment.
 8. Traditional Practitioners are recognized by listed Tribes as competent to provide ceremonial rites and traditions to interested veteran patients. Verification of competency from the representative’s Tribe must be sent to the Director, Chaplain Service, who will forward the verification to the facility Director. If a veteran patient requests traditional ceremonies and rites by a Traditional Practitioner from a non-listed Tribe, a referral will be made to the local Native Coordinator/NAISEP Manager.
 9. Traditional Practitioners are not chaplains and are not required to fulfill Chaplain Qualification Standards in VHA Handbook 5005 Part II, Appendix F1. This ministry is an augmentation to spiritual care provided by employed chaplains. Traditional Practitioners will function with the guidance of an employed chaplain. Traditional Practitioners are guided by the policies of the facility and by the provisions of VHA Handbook 1111.02 “Spiritual And Pastoral Care Procedures.”
 10. Chaplain Service at each facility, in collaboration with local Native Coordinators/NAISEP Managers, is responsible for orienting Traditional Practitioners to facility and Chaplain Service policies. Local Chaplain Services will document orientation and training of Traditional Practitioners.
 11. Traditional Practitioners whose competency has been verified by listed Tribes may be compensated for the specific services they provide on a fee-basis or by contract.
 12. Traditional practices may include but are not limited to purification and/or sweat lodge ceremonies, formal healing ceremonies, talking circles, vision quests, songs, stories, and teachings, one-to-one visitations of interested veterans, meditation, and other rites and ceremonies based on Tribal traditions. Local Chaplain Services will devise procedures for documenting visits by Traditional Practitioners to veteran patients.
 13. Utilization of purification and/or sweat lodges will be at the discretion of each Medical Center facility depending on the needs of

the interested veterans. Interested veterans with medical clearance may participate. A Traditional Practitioner will conduct this ceremony when needed.

14. Each Medical Center should have an area that may or may not be designated exclusively for Native American Indian services. This area must be private and secured from random intrusion by general onlookers. Alternatively, traditional practices may be conducted at the patient's bedside as appropriate. The Medical Center also may arrange to transport interested veteran patients to community-based Centers that provide Native American practices and rituals.

For a look at VA's Veterans Health Administration (VHA) handbook on "Spiritual and Pastoral Care Procedures," click [HERE](#).

**SAMPLE NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN TRADITIONAL PRACTITIONER
COMPETENCY VERIFICATION**

Date:

From: (name/title and tribe of verifying official)

To: Director, Department of Veterans Affairs Chaplain Service

Subj:

1. I verify that (name) ___is competent as a Native American Indian Traditional Practitioner to provide traditional rites and ceremonies to interested veteran patients. He/she is a member of the (insert name of tribe).

2. I understand that our Native American Indian Traditional Practitioner will be subject to federal and VA laws and policies while at the health care facility. I also understand that VA has the right to limit or prohibit any practices that it deems dangerous to the health or safety of patients.

Signature of designated Tribe official

Address_____



Powell Strategies Seeking Native American Veterans for National Outreach Video Campaign

Powell Strategies is seeking Veterans and family members to participate in a national outreach video campaign on behalf of VA to raise awareness about VA benefits and services.

If you are a Veteran or family member who has received VA benefits, you can help.

They will be conducting on-camera, professionally filmed interviews on behalf of VA to talk about your experiences with VA benefits and services, including health care, education and employment support, and memorials – or other benefits you have received from the VA.

Upcoming Interview Location and Dates:

DALLAS, TX

Fri (12/6), Sat (12/7), Sun (12/8)

WASHINGTON, DC

Fri (11/8), Sat (11/9), Sun (11/10)

LOS ANGELES, CA

Fri (1/10), Sat (1/11), Sun (1/12)

Your shared story could convince another Veteran or family member to take advantage of the VA benefits or services they have earned.

Register now at:

www.MyVeteranStory.com

Or email: veterans@powellstrat.com

Spread the word to other Veterans you know.



Western Region

“Take Pride in America’s Warriors” – Dinner and Native American Veteran Speakers



Title VII Indian Education

Take Pride in America's Warriors

Wednesday, November 13, 2013

6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Ballard Parent Center

2375 Congress St.
San Diego, CA 92110
(Located in Old Town)

Discover experiences of personal pride, tribal identity enhancement and self esteem to inspire new perceptions of the traditional Native American Warrior participation in events defending this land.



Keynote Speaker - Randy Edmonds

Southern Plains warriors and the Gourd dance tradition.

Special Invited WW II and Korea Veterans

Joe Renteria, Wilbur Solomon, Henry R. Murphy and Manuel Flores.

Potluck Dinner

- Main Dish Provided: Turkey
- Please bring a side dish, salad, veggies, fruit and/or dessert to share



In Collaboration with
American Indian Warriors Association
and
the Soaring Eagles Dance Troupe





Oregon's Greatest Veterans Day Parade"

You are invited to attend the parade which is taking place on Monday, November 11, 2013 in Downtown Roseburg, Oregon at 11:00. It will be "Honoring Native Americans Who Defended Our Freedom" and a post-parade trophy awarding will occur in the annex (follow signs). Refreshments will be served. Parade entry applications can be retrieved at: www.co.douglas.us/veterans/



DQ-U: Veterans Resource Fair - Powwow & Big Time ~ November 8th, 9th, and 10th

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Native American Art Vendors
Native American Food
Community Feed
Veteran's Fair
★★★★★

VETERAN'S POW-WOW & BIG TIME

Nov. 8th - CALIFORNIA NIGHT / CALIFORNIA DANCERS - 6 P.M. SPECIAL
Nov. 9th - NATIVE AMERICAN POW-WOW 12 P.M. - GOURD DANCING
1 P.M. - GRAND ENTRY 7 P.M. - GRAND ENTRY
Nov. 10th - 12 P.M. - GOURD DANCING 1 P.M. - GRAND ENTRY

VENDOR INFORMATION: SHELLEY WHITEBEAR OR IRA HOAGLIN - (916) 929-9761

DQ-U

33250 COUNTY RD. 31
YOLO COUNTY - DAVIS, CA 95617
VETERAN'S HEALTH CARE CONTACT: SKY WEBB - (916) 973 - 9581

NORTHERN DRUM - TBA HEAD MAN - MYRON HORSE
SOUTHERN DRUM - SOUTHERN EXPRESS HEAD WOMAN - RENA HORSE
MASTER OF CEREMONIES - TOM PHILLIPS HEAD BOY - LENO MCGURK JR.
ARENA DIRECTOR - TBA HEAD GIRL - MAYA HORSE

NOV. 8th, 9th & 10th
NO ALCOHOL OR DRUGS ADMISSION IS FREE



2013 Native American Heritage Month Proclamation

If you're in the Portland area, please join the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners and the Native Community as they proclaim and celebrate Native American Heritage Month in Multnomah County on Thursday, November 7, 2013 at 11:15 AM.

They will begin with traditional prayer and drumming and hear from members from the Native community through the Portland Youth and Elders Council. A reception will follow with food provided by NAYA Family Center's Nawitka Catering and the Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest, INC.

Event Location: Multnomah Building, Board Room, 501 SE - Hawthorne
Portland, OR 97214 - Event Time: 11/7/13 @ 11:15

Northwest Indian Veterans Association (NIVA) Calendar



NOVEMBER: November 1st, (Friday) NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN MONTH POW WOW (NIVA COLOR GUARD) - Geiser Hall, Clark College (across from the Vancouver VA): 4:30 PM, NIVA CG Eat There and Practice; 6:00 PM, NIVA CG Post Colors; 10:00 PM, NIVA CG Retire Colors;

November 5th, (Tuesday) GENERAL/SPECIAL ELECTIONS (ALL CITIZENS). The Veteran, more than anyone else should take the time to vote

November 5th, (Tuesday) CANAR CONFERENCE (NIVA COLOR GUARD) Portland Hilton and Executive Tower, 921 SW 6th Ave, 97204: 7:30 AM, NIVA CG Practice; 8:30 AM, NIVA Post Colors

November 6th, (Wednesday) MONTHLY NIVA MEETING (ALL NIVA MEMBERS) - Columbia Room, 3rd Floor, Bldg 11, Vancouver Division, PVAMC, 1601 East Fourth Plain Blvd - Vancouver, WA 98661 - 7:00 PM - 1. This Meeting we hope to have enough Active Members present to hold our Elections. Since Eugene left, Lisa who was Vice President, became President and she appointed Alvey as Vice President. Verne is still our Secretary. If we can hold elections we can vote them in for the next full term or whomever else you may want. However in order to Nominate, Vote or Hold Office, You have to be an Active Member and be Present at

our November Meeting. 2. This Meeting is also where we will do our Christmas Party Planning in earnest. So please be present to contribute to the discussion. 3. Color Guard, We always have a very busy schedule in November, so see where you can fit in and help.

November 7th, (Thursday) CANAR CONFERENCE (NIVA COLOR GUARD) Same location as above - 2:00 PM, NIVA CG Practice - 3:00 PM, NIVA CG Retire Colors.

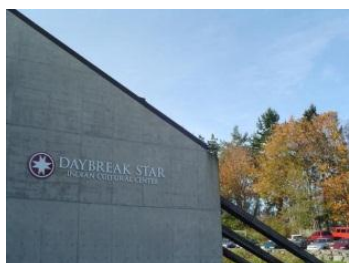
November 10th, (Sunday) ANNUAL VETERAN'S DAY CONVOY (NIVA COLOR GUARD) Clark County Fairgrounds, Ridgefield, WA - 10:00 AM, NIVA CG Practice; 11:00 AM, NIVA CG Post Colors, Say Prayer and Ceremony Begins; 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM, Convoy to Mile Post 282 near Wilsonville, OR; 2:00 PM, Medal Ceremony begins, followed by Free Salmon Dinner. If you do not have an Oregon Veterans Service Medal, bring proof of Veteran Status and sign up for it in Ridgefield before 11:00 AM, then receive your medal at the Ceremony at Mile Post 282.

November 11th, (Monday) NIVA VETERAN'S DAY OBSERVANCE (NIVA COLOR GUARD) Oregon Vietnam Memorial Wall (By Zoo): 10:00 AM, NIVA CG Practice; 11:00 AM, NIVA CG Post Colors; 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM, NIVA Ceremony Smudging, Prayer and Flute Playing

November 12th, (Tuesday) FREE VETERAN'S DINNER at the VANCOUVER ELKS, (F.Y.I.) 11605 SE McGillivray Blvd, Vancouver, WA 98662 - 5:00 PM, Dinner Begins 7:00 PM, Program Begins Honoring All Veterans - ARRIVE EARLY, THIS IS A VERY POPULAR EVENT

November 19th, (Tuesday) 150th ANNIVERSARY, GETTYSBURG ADDRESS - (NIVA COLOR GUARD) Foster Auditorium, Clark College (across from the Vancouver VA): 12:00 PM, NIVA CG Practice; 1:00 PM, NIVA CG Post Colors; 4:00 PM, NIVA CG Retire Colors

Ina Maka's Community Gathering – Celebrating Native Families and Veterans



Ina Maka's Community Gathering



Monday November 11th, 2013

1 PM to 4 PM

Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center
5011 Bernie Whitebear Way
Seattle, WA 98199

Come and enjoy the day with the Ina Maka Family Program. We will be celebrating our Native community and Veterans with

- Holiday Meal
- Bingo
- Raffle
- Crafts for children and parents
- Native Resource Booths



For more information call

Kristeene Smith 206-779-0139

Jodall Mattson 206-819-0270



Perris City Acquires Bus to Serve Veterans

The City-based Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center took possession this week of a refurbished 12-passenger, wheel-chair accessible bus donated by the Riverside Transit Agency. The \$70,000 van will transport, at no cost, former members of the military to the Veterans Administration medical center in Loma Linda, to the Riverside County Veterans Services Office and to doctors' appointments.

Former Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans, a former Marine, lobbied the RTA on behalf of Perris-area veterans. The bus will be based at the veterans' resource center at 227 North D Street, on the City Hall Campus.

"We owe these people a lot," Evans said. "We would not have our freedom without their service and sacrifice." Evans and Perris City Councilman Al Landers attached the personalized license plate to the bus—signifying the vehicle is ready for action. The personalized plate reads "SWVBRC" with the inscription "Honoring Veterans" below the lettering.

Landers is working with the veterans resource group on a "Small Business Summit" that will take place on Nov. 12. The summit brings together dozens of businesses and government and private advocacy groups and puts them in touch with veterans seeking jobs. Landers said his passion to help veterans is personal. In 1965, his brother—Richard Landers, a member of the 101st Airborne Division—was killed in Vietnam, a loss that pains him and his siblings to this day. Richard Landers was only 19 years old, and never saw the son who was born after his death.

"This City is doing its part to help veterans in any way possible," he said. "It is the responsibility of this community to stand behind its veterans and make their lives a little easier. They have done so much for us. A lot of our veterans who are returning from combat suffer physical disabilities and emotional problems. And some have made the ultimate sacrifice."

Al Renteria, a retired Marine and founder and CEO of the Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center, said 10,000-former Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine and Coast Guard personnel live in the Perris Valley. The new bus will pick up those who are confined to their home. Others who can get to the City Hall Campus will take the bus from there to their appointments.

Renteria used three words to sum up Perris' commitment to veterans: "informed, involved and interested." "When you can provide a free service to needy veterans, you take a big burden off their shoulders," Renteria said. "It's a tremendous feeling. There are no words to describe it." To learn more information about the veteran's bus in Perris, telephone 951-722-4941 or email bus@swvbrc.org.



San Francisco Veterans Town Hall/Collaborative ~ November 27 and December 18

"Dear Friends, you are all invited to the next San Francisco Veterans Town Hall/Collaborative to learn about some of the issues facing our Veterans and to hear about the resources, programs, benefits available for our veterans and families." These meetings will be held at the Philip Burton Federal Building, 450 Golden Gate Ave., 2nd Floor, CA/NV Room. The times for both dates are 0900-1100 and 100-1700. **PLEASE NOTE: THESE MEETINGS ARE HELD IN FEDERAL FACILITIES AND YOU MUST BRING A GOVERNMENT ISSUED PICTURE IDENTIFICATION TO BE ALLOWED TO ENTER.** This event is a "one stop" for federal, state, and local governments, and community partners to talk about any services or programs available to active duty, reserve, guard, veterans, or family members. This is also an opportunity for you to express interest in supporting our local military community and a great outreach event. This event is open to all. For more information please contact Eddie Ramirez at 415-740-4399 or 415-750-2189 – Eduardo.ramirez2@va.gov



California Veterans' Backlogged Claims May Soon See the Light of Day

An agreement signed by the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will help California veterans and their families receive their benefits more quickly and help reduce the backlog of claims that have kept some veterans waiting for nearly two years.

The Memorandum of Understanding, along with \$3 million and 36 limited-term positions authorized by the Governor's 2013-14 budget, allows CalVet to hire teams of 12 veterans claims representatives for VA's regional offices in Los Angeles, Oakland and San Diego. Claims representatives will review claims pending for 125 days or longer and work to make them fully developed and ready for VA rating. Once a claim has been adjudicated and a disability rating has been assigned,

compensation or pension payments can be properly calculated and sent out to the veteran.

“This agreement, along with greater access to veterans’ records and the dedication of our veteran claims representatives, will go a long way easing the backlog of California benefits claims,” said CalVet Secretary Peter J. Gravett. “By reviewing claims that have been pending the longest and working forward, we will reduce the waiting time veterans have had to face.”

CalVet has begun hiring veterans claims representatives and, to date, has 14 of the 36 positions filled. To view the veterans claims representative job bulletins for openings in Los Angeles, Oakland and San Diego, go to <http://www.calvet.ca.gov/AboutUs/Jobs/JobAnnouncements.aspx>.



Veterans Training Support Center ~ Accommodating Veterans: PTSD & TBI

There will be free training on November 15, 2013 from 0900-1600 at The 2100 Building – 2100 24th Avenue South, Seattle, WA. **To register:** [click here](#); **for more information:** [click here](#); **for all the upcoming VTSC workshops:** [click here](#)



Oregon Military Support Network (OMSN)

OMSN began in 2007 in response to the Oregon reintegration strategy for service men and women who were returning from deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan. In May 2010, a group of professionals came together to support the effort and a formed a board of 11 directors which developed and approved by-laws, the organization’s first Business Plan, and received an Oregon Secretary of State approved/ recognized 501c3. The Oregon Military Support Network’s (OMSN) vision and mission are as follows:

Vision

The Oregon Military Support Network is a catalyst and a resource that facilitates the support of current and former members of the uniformed military of the United States of America and their families.

Mission

The Oregon Military Support Network’s primary mission is to address the needs and

welfare of all veterans and their families. The mission is achieved through a combination of umbrella services from partner agencies and the development and delivery of other services that are delivered through OMSN staff and volunteers.

Service Delivery Strategy

The Oregon Military Support Network is a veterans' resource that identifies, prioritizes and coordinates services to assist veterans and their families by guiding them to services that will help them achieve their life goals.

OMSN offers of on-going services to address the needs of the people it serves by: Conducting Resource Network meetings in the Northwest to strategically develop a network of organizations that team together to meet the needs of military personnel and their families. This network is fashioned after the Oregon and Southwest Washington "211" network which is a coordinated service that is supported by local partners. It is the intent of OMSN to dovetail with the 211 effort and further bolster the overall services and connectivity between veterans and their families and service providers that can address and meet their needs. OMSN is focused on serving as a central resource hub and navigator to act as a conduit to promote the education of service providers and ease of access to information, resources and referrals to benefits and services for military personnel and their families. An example of a service that is provided through the network is Financial Education and Asset Building (FEAB) that is delivered through CASH Oregon.com (Creating Assets Savings and Hope);

- Coordinating and convening Job Fairs targeting employers that hire veterans and have shown a willingness to provide reasonable accommodations to enable disabled veterans to return to work;
- Coordinating and conducting education workshops and seminars;
- Using the Resource Network meetings to develop strategies for addressing the regional needs of veterans and their families and to enhance the availability of additional services for wounded and disabled veterans; and,
- Training staff and volunteer coordinators who can facilitate regional OMSN networking and outreach meetings throughout the state.

The Resource Network meetings are regularly scheduled on a monthly basis in the following locations: 1st Thursday – Tigard; 2nd Thursday - Vancouver; 3rd Thursday – Salem; Gresham; and, 5th Thursday (Quarterly) – Mid Valley in Tangent, OR.

Central Region



Devil's Lake Hospital to House VA Clinic

Click [here](#) to read the story at its original source – Inforum.com

“Mercy Hospital has agreed to house a Department of Veterans Affairs clinic, which will provide telehealth services from the Fargo VA hospital and part-time in-person physician care. “It came up in board discussions almost 10 years ago. It has been a constant hope of ours, a constant goal,” said hospital board President Brenda Langerud.

“Our veterans provided a great service to this country. And as a lot of our veterans are aging, they’re at a point in their lives where they can’t travel as easily, so a clinic in Devils Lake gives our veterans an opportunity to receive those primary care services close to home,” said hospital President Jim Marshall.

Some veterans are a bit skeptical. Pete Padilla of Disabled American Veterans said he’s been promised a clinic four times, but each time it fell through. “You’ll excuse us for being skeptical, but we’ve heard that for 10 years, you know,” he said. After nearly a decade of trying to bring a VA clinic to Devils Lake, the deal almost didn’t get done. There was a deadline of Sept. 30, the end of the fiscal year, to sign the deal. The agreement was made with just three days to spare. Marshall guarantees the clinic will soon open. “This will happen,” he said. “Mercy Hospital has been given a contract to build the clinic for the VA.” The clinic is projected to open early next spring.”

From VA’s Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs:

“The VA is pleased to announce the lease award for space and construction of the VA Primary Outpatient and Telehealth Clinic (POTC) Devils Lake, North Dakota to Mercy Hospital, 1031 7th St. NE Devils Lake, North Dakota. The POTC will provide one-half day telehealth services with a part-time physician and on-site staffing by nurses to allow Veterans to be seen by a health care professional five days a week. Direct access to specialists at the Fargo VA HCS will be available through telehealth. The design for this clinic will begin within 60 days of the contract award date and is expected to open in early spring 2014.”

Southwest Region

Native American Veterans Benefits Fair



The benefits fair will be held on November 4th at The Chickasaw Nation Medical Center – 1921 Stonecipher Blvd, Ada, OK. Green Conference Room – 0900-1500. For more information, contact Ted Underwood, Native American Benefits Coordinator – Ardmore Area Office. 1-580-226-4821 or 1-888-808-9508